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of sharks made their appearance off the banks and attacked nearly thirty divers, two of whom were killed under water, the others being rescued in a precarious condition.

Diving is carried out every day during fine weather, work commencing an hour after sunrise and ceasing an hour before sunset. The interval between the early morning prayer and the start of diving is spent by the crews in opening the oysters collected on the previous day. This is done with crooked knives called *mufaliq*, under the superintendence of the *Nakhuda*, who weighs and registers the pearls. The stench arising from this operation must be smelt to be believed. Before they start work the divers are allowed a light meal of half a pound of dates and a few cups of coffee each. Once they have entered the water work is continued without intermission until *Dhuhr*, about 2 p.m., when it is suspended for prayers, a few cups of coffee, and an hour's rest. After *Maghrib*, or evening prayers, the divers take a substantial meal of fish, rice and dates and then, after a little smoking and coffee-drinking, retire to rest for the night.

Divers sometimes suffer from the stings of the devil-fish, and when there are many of these about they wear a long white shirt to protect them from their embraces. Although a very fatiguing occupation, diving is not particularly injurious to the health, and is practised even by old men. In some cases it gives rise to diseases of the respiratory system and to deafness. Skin disease is a common ailment amongst divers, who guard against it by rubbing themselves with *jafi*, a concoction made from the inner shell of the Persian acorn. Senna leaves and other herbs are taken in cases of sickness, but if serious illness occurs, recourse is had to cautery with a hot iron.

Pearl diving is nearly always an hereditary occupation. The reason for this is purely economic. During the off-season the divers have to provide for their families and are often too lazy to undertake any other kind of work, although a few take up fishing. Being an extravagant class, they soon spend the money they have made from diving, and are obliged to borrow from the *Nakhuda*. They are seldom able to repay this debt, the interest on which accumulates, and the only way in which it can be repaid is by means of annual instalments deducted from their diving pay and bonuses. Thus a family of divers, to the second or third generation, may be indebted to a *Nakhuda* or his heirs and, unless the diver finds an alternative means of repaying the debt, he must continue diving to the end of his days, and his son after him.